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Translation of Four English Literature Treasures - Christopher Marlowe

Traducción de cuatro tesoros de la literatura inglesa - Christopher Marlowe

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Author:

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was an English playwright, poet, and translator of the Elizabethan period, considered one of the precursors of Shakespeare. His style is characterized by heightened poetic language, the use of blank verse, and bold themes exploring power, desire, and transgression. Marlowe wrote plays such as Doctor Faustus and Tamburlaine, as well as poetry that reflects both sensibility and provocation.

The selected poems present different facets of Marlowe's art: From the classical Sensuality of Helena in The Face that Launch'd a Thousand Ships, the pastoral ideal of love in The passionate Shepherd to His Love, the theatrical fantasy in I Must Have Wanton Poets, to the martial vision in Our Conquering Swords

Translation

The following are four of the author's poems with their respective Spanish translations.

The Face that Launch'd a Thousand Ships

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sack'd;

And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azur'd arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!

El Rostro que Lanzó Mil Barcos

¿Este fue el rostro que lanzó mil barcos,
y quemó las torres de Ilión?
Querida Helena, hazme inmortal con un beso.
Sus labios chupan mi alma, ¡Mira como vuela!
Ven Helena, ven, devuélveme mi alma.
Aquí voy a habitar, el cielo está en esos labios,
y todo lo que no sea Helena es escoria.
Voy a ser París, y por amor a ti,
En lugar de Troya, Wittenberg será saqueada;
Combatiré con los débiles Menelaos,
Y llevaré tus colores en mi cresta emplumada
!Si! y voy a herir a Aquiles en el talón,
Y después volveré con Helena para darle un beso.
!Oh! eres más hermosa que el aire de la tarde
Vestido con la belleza de mil estrellas;
Más brillante que el flamígero Júpiter

Cuando se apareció a la desventurada Semele;
Más hermosa que el monarca del cielo
En los brazos azulados de la lasciva Aretusa;
¡Y nadie más que tu será mi adorada!

The Passionate Shepherd To His Love

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroider's all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,

Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

El Pastor apasionado a su amada

Vente a vivir conmigo y sé mi amor,
Y probaremos todos los placeres,
Que los valles, arboledas, colinas y campos,
O terrenos montañosos ofrecen.

Y nos sentaremos sobre las rocas,
Mirando los pastores alimentar sus rebaños,
Junto a ríos poco profundos, cuyas cascadas
Entonan madrigales con aves melodiosas.

Y te haré camas de rosas,
Y miles de ramilletes fragantes,
Una corona de flores y una túnica
Bordada con hojas de mirto.

Un vestido hecho con la más fina lana,
Sacado de nuestros lindos corderos;
Zapatillas suaves para el frío,
Con hebillas del oro más puro.

Un cinturón de paja y brotes de hiedra,

Con broches de coral y perlas de ámbar;
Y si estos placeres pueden moverte,
Vente a vivir conmigo y sé mi amor.

Los pastores bailarán y cantarán
Para tu deleite en cada mañana de Mayo;
Si estos encantos pueden conmoverte,
Entonces vive conmigo y sé mi amor.

I Must Have Wanton Poets

MUST have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please:
Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;
My men, like sears grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay;
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
And in his sportful hands an olive-tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there, hard by,

One like Actæon, peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transform'd,
And running in the likeness of an hart,
By yelping hounds pull'd down, shall seem to die:
Such things as these best please his majesty.

Debo Tener Poetas Libertinos

DEBO tener poetas libertinos, ingenios agradables,
Músicos, que al tocar la cuerda
Puedan atraer al dócil rey hacia donde yo quiera:
La música y la poesía son su deleite;
Por eso en la noche tendré mascaradas italianas,
Discursos agradables, comedias y espectáculos placenteros;
Y en el día, cuando él camine afuera,
Mis pajes vestirán como ninfas silvestres;
Mis hombres, como sátiros pastando en los prados,
Con sus pies de cabra bailarán el antiguo heno;
A veces un niño encantador, con la forma de Diana,
Con cabello que dora el agua al deslizarse,
Coronillas de perlas en sus brazos desnudos,
Y en sus manos juguetonas un olivo,
Para ocultar aquellas partes que a los hombres les encanta ver,
Se bañará en un manantial; y allí cerca,
Otro, como Acteón, espiando a través del bosque,
Será transformado por la furiosa diosa,
Y corriendo con la apariencia de un ciervo,
Derribado por los aullidos de los perros, parecerá morir:
Cosas como estas son las que más complacen a su majestad.

Our Conquering Swords

Our conquering swords shall marshall us the way
We use to march upon the slaughter´d foe,
Trampling their bowels with our horses' hoofs,
Brave horses bred on the white Tartarian hills.
My camp is like to Julius Caesar´s host,
That never fought but had the victory;
Nor in Pharsalia was there such hot war
As these, my followers, willingly would have.
Legions of spirits, fleeting in the air,
Direct our bullets and our weapons' points,
And make your strokes to wound the senseless light;
And when she sees our bloody colours spread,
Then Victory begins to take her flight,
Resting herself upon my milk-white tent—
But come, my lords, to weapons let us fall;
The field is ours, the Turk, his wife, and all.

Nuestras espadas Conquistadoras

Nuestras espadas conquistadoras nos guiarán el camino
Que acostumbramos a marchar sobre los enemigos derribados,
Pisoteando sus entrañas con los cascos de nuestros caballos,
Valientes corceles criados en las blancas colinas de Tartaria.
Mi campamento es como el ejército de Julio César,
Que nunca luchó sin obtener la victoria;
Ni en Farsalia hubo una guerra tan ardiente
Como las que estos, mis seguidores, desearían tener.

Legiones de espíritus, flotando en el aire,
Dirigen nuestras balas y las puntas de nuestras armas,
Y hacen que sus golpes hieren la luz insensible;
Y cuando ella vea desplegarse nuestros sangrientos colores,
Entonces la Victoria comenzará su vuelo,
Reposando sobre mi tienda blanca como la leche—
Pero vengan, mis señores, empuñemos las armas;
El campo es nuestro, el turco, su esposa y todo lo demás.

Translator's Note:

My translation philosophy is based on achieving a balance between fidelity to the original text and accessibility for the modern Spanish-speaking reader. My objective is to preserve the historical, cultural, and poetic essence of the source poems while making deliberate choices to ensure clarity, fluency and resonance in the target language.

In the first poem, The Face That Launch'd a Thousand Ships, I chose to omit the literal translation of "Topless" because towers in ancient Troy were understood as lacking roofs, translating it as "Torres sin Techo" could sound redundant and strange in Spanish. Therefore, I opted for a more natural translation that preserves the meaning without overexplaining.

For the second poem, The passionate Shepherd to His Love, specific terms such as "Kirtle" were translated as "Túnica", and "Crownets" as "Coronillas", using appropriate equivalents in Spanish for the time. This decision ensures that the reader not only understands the references, but also experiments with the romantic atmosphere intended by the poet.

In the third poem, I Must Wanton Poets, mythological references such as Diana and Actaeon were kept in their traditional Spanish forms to maintain the literary and cultural framework. On the other side, the sequence of actions such as spying, transformation and symbolic death was clarified to preserve the flow of the myth without altering their principal elements. Finally, in the fourth poem, Our Conquering Swords, I opted to respect the history context with phrases like "Our conquering swords shall marshall us the way" became "Nuestras espadas conquistadoras nos guiarán el camino", preserving the rhythm. History references like "Pharsalia" and "Tartary" were also conserved to honor the source poem.

Also, intense images, such as "Trampling their bowels", were translated directly to reflect the real brutality of the war, like the description by the poet. In all cases, I prioritized both semantic faithfulness and syntactic sensitivity, aiming for a translation that echoes the emotional and aesthetic impact of Marlowe's original poetry.